

Message Text

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41

ACTION EUR-01

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----- 092397

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8322

AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMCONSUL TORONTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS OTTAWA 4698

MONTREAL FOR USIS

USIA FOR IBS/PE; VOA

STATE FOR EUR/CAN/INR

TORONTO FOR USIS

PARIS FOR USIS/SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION

1. ON SATURDAY EVENING DECEMBER 13 AMBASSADOR PORTER MET INFORMALLY WITH A HANDFUL OF CANADIAN JOURNALISTS WHOM HE KNOW PERSONALLY FOR A FAREWELL DRINK. DURING THE COURSE OF THE EVENING THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED HIS FRANK VIEWS ON THE RANGE OF US-CANADIAN RELATIONS AND SAID THAT HIS REMARKS WOULD BE ON THE RECORD IF ANYONE CHOSE TO USE THEM. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE PRESS COMMENTS TO DATE RESULTING FROM THIS INFORMAL GOODBYE:

2. CHARLES LYNCH, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT, SOUTHAM NEWS SERVICES WROTE THAT THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE SAW RELATIONS UNCLASSIFIED

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BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES DETERIORATING SINCE HE CAME HERE

AND THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA FOR PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU AND PRESIDENT FORD TO GET TOGETHER. LYNCH POINTED OUT THAT THE AMBASSADOR MADE IT CLEAR THAT "HE HAD NO INTENTION OF INTERFERING IN CANADIAN POLITICS - INDEED, HE DENIED THAT HE HIMSELF WAS BEING CRITICAL OF CANADIAN POLICIES AND ATTITUDES. WHAT HE WANTED TO DO, HE SAID, WAS PUT CANADIANS ON NOTICE THAT NATIONALISTIC ATTITUDES IN THIS COUNTRY WERE CAUSING ALARM IN CONGRESSIONAL AND MEDIA CIRCLES IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THAT AN ATMOSPHERE OF SUSPICION, IF NOT HOSTILITY, WAS DEVELOPING IN IMPORTANT AMERICAN QUARTERS.." LYNCH SAID THE AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT TIME AND READER'S DIGEST CASE WAS AN IRRITANT, BUT THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED EARLIER THIS YEAR NOT TO INTERVENE IN SUPPORT OF THE U.S.-OWNED PUBLICATIONS, EITHER IN A FORMAL OR AN INFORMAL WAY. WHAT WAS IMPORTANT, ACCORDING TO LYNCH, IN THE AMBASSADOR'S VIEW WAS THAT THIS ISSUE, COMING ON THE HEELS OF OTHERS, "WAS HAVING A NOTICEABLE EFFECT UPON PUBLIC OPINION AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES, AND THAT SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN FROM THE STATE BORDERING CANADA WERE BECOMING INCREASINGLY VOCAL IN THEIR CRITICISM AND CONCERN OF WHAT THEY REGARDED AS UNFRIENDLY ACTS BY CANADA." IN A RELATED STORY BY LYNCH HE DISCUSSED THE AMBASSADOR'S VIEW OF THE DIMINISHING SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES. HE SAID THE AMBASSADOR REALIZED IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR THE PRESIDENT TO SIT DOWN WITH MR. TRUDEAU BECAUSE OF THE ELECTION YEAR, BUT ACCORDING TO LYNCH, HE KEPT REITERATING THAT IT WAS TIME FOR PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU AND PRESIDENT FORD TO SIT DOWN AND DISCUSS "THE WHOLE PHILOSOPHY UNDERLYING OUR RELATIONSHIP." FINALLY, LYNCH RECALLED THE INCIDENT IN 1963 WHEN AMBASSADOR LIVINGSTON MERCHANT MET WITH A GROUP OF CANADIAN CORRESPONDENTS IN THE BASEMENT OF THE HOUSE OF AN AIDE, AND URGED THAT CANADA FULFIL HER PROMISE TO THE U.S. TO ACCEPT NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

3. JACK BEST WRITING IN THE FREE PRESS PAPERS ALSO REFERRED TO THE DESIRABILITY OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER. HE REFERRED TO "A CTV NEWS REPORT QUOTING MR. PORTER THAT THE DEFEAT OF THE NDP GOVERNMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA IS 'HELPFUL' IN EASING THE RISING TIDE OF AMERICAN RESENTMENT TOWARD CANADIAN POLICIES. BUT IN INFORMAL TALK UNCLASSIFIED

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WITH THIS OFFICE MR. BEST SAID THAT HE HIMSELF DID NOT RECALL SUCH A QUOTE. BEST QUOTED AMBASSADOR PORTER AS SAYING "HIS GOVERNMENT IS NOT GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE 'THIRD OPTION', AIMED AT DIVERSIFYING CANADA'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS AND LESSENING ITS DEPENDENCE ON THE U.S. THE ATTITUDE WAS 'LET CANADA DO ITS OWN THING IF IT WANTS TO.'" HE ALSO SAID THAT MR. PORTER WAS CONCERNED ABOUT ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE PROVINCES FREQUENTLY CAUSING COMPLICATIONS IN RELATIONS BETWEEN WASHINGTON AND

OTTAWA. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER ALLEN MAC EACHEN WOULD LIKE TO DEVISE METHODS WHEREBY PROVINCIAL INITIATIVES WITH FOREIGN RAMIFICATIONS WOULD BE BETTER COORDINATED WITH OTTAWA.

4. DOUGLAS FISHER WRITING IN THE TORONTO SUN SAID "WILLIAM PORTER IS A PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMAT, NOT ONE OF THE 'POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS' SO COMMON IN BOTH THE U.S. AND CANADIAN FOREIGN SERVICES. HE'S THE FIRST AMBASSADOR HERE WHOM I'VE KNOWN AT ALL BEYOND A NOD OF THE HEAD IN PASSING. MY IMPRESSION IS THAT HE DOES NOT SPEAK OR ACT WITHOUT CAREFUL CONSIDERATION. HE HAS SAID THAT 'YOU'RE BIG BOYS NOW.' THAT IS, CANADIANS HAVE GROWN UP ... IN THE GOVERNMENTAL SENSE. THEREFORE, THERE'S NO POINT IN A REPRESENTATIVE OF A FRIENDLY WORLD POWER BEHAVING HERE AS THOUGH WE AND OUR GOVERNMENT ARE ADOLESCENTS TO BE PATRONIZED." FISHER DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF A TRUDEAU/FORD MEETING AND SOME OF THE ISSUES OF CONCERN BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CANADA SUCH AS PETROLEUM AND GAS RESOURCES, PRICES AND DISTRIBUTION, POTASH INDUSTRY QUESTION, AUTO PCT, WATER RIGHTS AND POLLUTION CONTROL, THE GARRISON DAM, TV COMMERCIALS, "THE OVERALL IMAGE WHICH EMERGED FOR ME FROM PORTER'S VIEWS IS SIMPLY OF TWO COUNTRIES AT A LONG ARM'S LENGTH YET STUCK WITH AN INEVITABLE RANGE OF MUTUAL, OFTEN CONTENTIOUS AFFAIRS. QUIET DIPLOMACY IS PAST. SO IS ANY OBSEQUIOUSNESS ON CANADA'S PART OR ANY CURSORY HIGHHANDEDNESS ON THE U.S.'S PART. THE U.S. IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TO US THAN SOME OF OUR HIGH-MINDED DISCUSSION ABOUT CANADA SEEKING 'THE THIRD OPTION', WOULD SUGGEST. CANADA IS MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT TO THE U.S. THAN RATHER OCCASIONAL OR RANDOM INTEREST SHOWN REGARDING IT BY THE PRESS AND POLITICIANS OF WASHINGTON. THEREFORE, THERE NEEDS TO BE A REGULAR ENGAGEMENT OF THE TWO PRINCIPAL LEADERS OF THE COUNTRIES, BEGINNING NOW."

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5. BILL WILSON WRITING A SYNDICATED COLUMN IN THE MONTREAL STAR QUOTED AMBASSADOR AS SAYING "THE LEVEL OF ADRENALIN IS RISING IN THE U.S. WHERE RELATIONS WITH CANADA ARE CONCERNED." WILSON POINTED OUT THAT AMBASSADOR PORTER IS A CAREER DIPLOMAT WIDELY REGARDED AS ONE OF THE MOST PROFESSIONAL MEN IN THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE." IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT HE WOULD SPEAK OUT SO FRANKLY EXCEPT WITH THE FORE-KNOWLEDGE AND CONCURRENCE OF HIS GOVERNMENT. MR. PORTER EMPHASIZED REPEATEDLY THAT HE WAS SPEAKING SOLELY OF AMERICAN REACTIONS TO EVENTS IN CANADA, NOT SEEKING TO COMMENT ON THE CANADIAN ACTIONS THEMSELVES." AFTER LISTING SOME OF THE ISSUES BETWEEN CANADA AND THE US, WILSON SAID THAT THE AMBASSADOR RECOGNIZED THE PROVINCIAL ASPECT OF SOME OF THE QUESTIONS AND CONCEDED THAT THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

MIGHT MAKE A DIFFERENCE ALTHOUGH THE SOCRED ATTITUDE TOWARDS AFFAIRS AFFECTING THE UNITED STATES REMAINED TO BE SEEN. HE THOUGHT THAT CANADIAN-AMERICAN PROBLEMS WERE MORE COMPLEX BECAUSE OF THE PRACTICE OF INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS ON EACH SIDE DEALING DIRECTLY WITH EACH OTHER RATHER THAN IN A COORDINATED FASHION. "MR. PORTER EMPHASIZED THAT THE RISE OF ADRENALIN WHICH HE FEARS WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IS OCCURRING BOTH IN THE CONGRESS AND IN THE AMERICAN MEDIA." ABOUT 100 CONGRESSMEN AND SEVERAL SENATORS STAND FOR RE-ELECTION IN 1976 IN BORDER STATES WHERE ISSUES INVOLVING CANADA ARE IMPORTANT. PERHAPS BECAUSE THE ISSUE IS CURRENT AND THE AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THE REACTIONS OF AMERICAN EDITORS, THE JOURNALISTS AT THE PARTY TENDED TO SEIZE ON THE TIME-READER'S DIGEST ISSUE AS THE PARAMOUNT ONE. MR. PORTER EMPHASIZED ITS IMPORTANCE, BECAUSE OF THE EFFECT IT HAS ON INFLUENTIAL AMERICAN THINKING, BUT HE INSISTED THAT HIS CONCERN LAY WITH THE RANGE OF CANADIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS." WHEN A CANADIAN JOURNALIST QUESTIONED THE IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN PRESS REACTIONS, MR. PORTER LAUGHED AND SAID 'WELL THE MEDIA COUNTS FOR SOMETHING - AT LEAST WITH US.'" WILSON NOTED THAT THE QUESTION AROSE AS TO WHY THE AMBASSADOR HAD CHOSEN A SMALL GROUP OF JOURNALISTS AS THE FORUM FOR HIS DEPARTING REMARKS, RATHER THAN FOR INSTANCE A SPEECH. HE SAID THE AMBASSADOR SAID "SOMETHINGS" WERE UNDERWAY AND "ENIGMATICALLY ADDED "THAT'S WHY I CHOSE TO DO IT THIS WAY' MR. PORTER WAS CLEARLY PUTTING THE CAT UNCLASSIFIED

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AMONG THE PIGEONS ON BEHALF OF HIS GOVERNMENT. GIVEN HIS DIPLOMATIC STANDING, IT DOES NOT SEEM POSSIBLE THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD HAVE DONE SO UNLESS IT HAD FIRST DECIDED THAT QUIET DIPLOMACY WAS NOT WORKING ADEQUATELY."

6. THE CANADIAN PRESS CARRIED ACCOUNTS OF THE AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS BASED ON REPORTS FROM CTV.
FORDNEY

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